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The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 351. DECEMBER, 1935.

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KINGDOM. POWER. GLORY.

"Thy Kingdom Come." [illegible] v. 10.

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NOTES AND NEWS.

With this issue, half-yearly subscriptions are now due. We heartily thank our supporters and all who act as our agents in the various congregations. This Magazine belongs to the Church; it exists to serve the cause of liberal religion. Its purpose is to help our own people better to understand the faith they hold, the meaning and history of their Church, to inform them as to what is being done in the various congregations, and to awaken enthusiasm for the cause in which they have enlisted. When you have finished with the Magazine do not send it to be waste-paper, but treat it reverently as first cousin to the Bible itself, and hand it to someone who may be in need of enlightenment as to what our religion is; like the R.C. who asked his Unitarian neighbour: "Well, Pat! What is't ye believe, anyway?" We are publishing a series of articles on the elementary doctrines of Christianity, which began in October, on "At-one-ment," and last month the title was "The Bible."

* * *

From the paragraph, headed "Excommunicated," it will be seen how very necessary it is, at a time when our Church is deliberately misrepresented, and the old animosity of fifty years ago being revived to bring about our "well deserved extinction," we ought to be able to give a reason for the faith that is in us. We remember in our early years hearing repeatedly of "the dying cause, and it won't live long." October 6th at the Ulster Hall looked very much like "a dying cause," didn't it, when crowds were turning back from the doors half-an-hour before the service began? Nor was the subsequent meeting less heartsome on November 17th, in the Ulster Hall, presided over by the Moderator, the Rev. Dr. A. L. Agnew, and addressed by the Rev. Dr. Rattray of Cambridge.

* * *

We, therefore, appeal to our friends in every congregation to see that the sale of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian "is not neglected." That in no Church does it simply lie on the table in the vestibule just taking its chance, but to see that it is sold. If the Magazine were sold out each month, that would only pay the printer's bill. Any margin there is over is due to advertisements and to the subsidy.

* * *

Again we thank our advertisers for their patronage, and commend their advertisements to the attention of our readers. Some of them have testified that they read them every word. The late Rev. Alex. Gordon carefully read the Magazine from the first word to the last, and found matter of interest in the advertisements as well as in the articles.

* * *

Again we find ourselves in times almost as critical in the world's history as 1914, and while we sing our Christmas hymns and begin once more the Christian year, war still "marks the earth with ruin." Marvellous discover-

ies are made by Science, the mental energies of the race are enormously quickened, but, alas, not the conscience; and without that, knowledge, which is power, is in constant danger of becoming a menace and a scourge. We wish good-will to all our readers when Christmas brings the message of Peace.

SUBSIDY FUND.

Contributions should be addressed to the Manager, Rev. A. Davison, Dromore, by whom they will be gratefully acknowledged.

THE DIVINE WISDOM.

"The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence for ever." —(Isaiah xxxii., 17).

* * *

"The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us."—(Isaiah xxxiii., 22).

January, 1936, number published on the **Fourth Saturday** of December. Copy should be in before the 21st at latest. Editor: Rev. John Barron, Ballywalter, Co. Down.

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Half-yearly subscriptions are now due, and should be forwarded to the Manager.

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The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian can be obtained at the Depository, 35 Rosemary Street, Belfast.

* * *

"Jones," said a teacher to a boy in his class, "what have you to do before you can receive the forgiveness of sins?" "Please, sir, you have to sin!"

* * *

"Perhaps the holiest men are not always those who commit fewest faults, but those who have most courage, most love, and the most free spirit, those who make their heartiest effort for conquering self, and who are not afraid of a stumble, even of a fall, so long as their progress is certain."

THE MASTER JESUS.

The first Sunday of this month is called in the Christian Year "the First Sunday in Nativity." For six months from December 1st, generally speaking, attention is devoted to the various stages in the Life of Christ, which —whatever the historical value of such a procedure—can be spiritualised in being applied to the stages of the Christ Life of the Disciple, viz. — Birth, Baptism, Transfiguration, Passion and Resurrection, and Ascension, after the method of Paul, who uses these to indicate the outstanding events of the life of Discipleship taken earnestly. Indeed Paul is little concerned with the alleged events in the life of the historical Jesus. "If any man be in Christ he is become a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." Thus he uses expressions such as "Christ formed in you," "Baptised with Christ," "Transformed from glory to glory or transfigured," "Crucified with Christ," "Buried with Christ," "Risen with Christ," and whatever may or may not have happened in history, nothing can disturb the inner verity of which the outer narrative is a parable. Indeed there are great scholars to-day who tell us of Passion dramas and dramas of Initiation, which had their place in the background in the voluminous literature from which the Gospels were selected.

Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born,
But not within thyself,
Thy life is all forlorn.

And on the Holy Cross
He hangeth but in vain,
Unless within thy heart
It be set up again.

If in some far-off foreign island the only Gospels that had ever reached there were Mark and John, the story of the Miraculous Birth would never be known in that place. Jesus himself never makes any such claim for himself, nor his disciples, nor his Mother, nor John the Baptist, nor any of the Epistles. Paul strongly insists on the

Resurrection; he is silent on the Birth. Right from the beginning, parallel with the traditions of the Ancient Historical Churches, keeping on a struggling existence until 1837, when the Armenians stamped out the last remnant of it as heretical, there was a Church, the Paulician Church of Armenia, which taught that until Jesus was thirty years of age, He was as any other good man, or as one of the prophets, but at His baptism, then He became the Christ when the Spirit descended on Him. Then was He illumined, then was He lifted up, then became He the Son of God and the Saviour of us sinners; then became He the door of heaven and the stone rolled to the mouth of hell. "It is, therefore, not without significance that Mark chooses the Baptism as the point to write 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,'" and John does much the same thing, after prefixing the Prologue, which is not a part of the narrative, but a philosophical introduction, no doubt derived from Alexandria, which was a strong centre for teaching of that type. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul writes: "Though He was a son, yet he learned obedience by the things that He suffered, and having been made perfect (in His obedience) He became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation." Eternal life is the knowledge of God, and its opposite is the ignorance of God. Let us ponder these thoughts as preparation for Christmas.

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THE LATE REV. R. LYTTLE.

("Irish News," March 11th, 1897).

An interesting gathering took place last night in Moneyrea. The occasion was the presentation of an address with a handsome gift to the eloquent and able minister, the Rev. Richard Lyttle. Amongst those present were—Revs. E. J. Fripp, A. E. O'Connor, T. Dunkerley, A. Ashworth, J. A. Kelly, C. E. Pike, Wm. Weatherall, W. J. Davies.

On the motion of Mr. Abernethy, seconded by Mr. W. Adair, Mr. James Bennett, J.P., was called to the chair. In the course of his remarks, the Chairman said: "For a long time it was felt by members of the congregation that a mark of esteem should be shown to their minister. (Hear, hear). He had laid them under many obligations to him as a pastor and a true friend. The farmers of Ulster and of Ireland, whatever be their religion or politics, acknowledged that he had been a most courageous advocate of their rights."

After the presentation had been made, Rev. R. Lyttle, in reply, said—Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, you will believe me when I say I have never occupied so embarrassing a position as I do at this present moment. It is easier to withstand the shafts of an enemy than to acknowledge suitably the generosity and kindness of one's friends. There is something so unique in the composition of this meeting and in the way in which so many different people have joined in contributing to the gift you offer that I feel unable to make any adequate response. Next to the approval of his own conscience, I can conceive of nothing more satisfactory to a minister than the appreciation and affection of his own congregation. (Applause). All that I have enjoyed throughout my pastorate, and to-night it has been registered afresh in a formal and very generous and tangible manner. But a great additional happiness has been added by the presence here to-night of so many personal friends from different parts of Ulster, ladies and gentlemen, I believe, belonging to nearly every division of the Christian Church in our

province, and professing widely different political connections, and last, but not least, my brethren to whom I feel united by ties that are stronger than any links of ecclesiastical connection. (Applause). Their presence here to-night is more pleasant to me than I can well express. To all of you I desire to express my gratitude for your kindness, and this gratitude extends also to those who have joined in this presentation, though they reside in distant parts of this province, and are not able to be here to-night. (Applause). Allow me to express my special indebtedness to the members of the two committees who instituted this presenation, and especially to my friends who have acted as secretaries, and on whom so many self-imposed labours have fallen; the beautiful address, the workmanship of which is so rich in the treasure of Irish art, the words of which are so full of kindness and generosity. Many generations of Moneyrea men have made the proud boast that they and their minister occupied a position of greatest freedom, untrammelled by any fixed limits of thought. (Applause). I do not stand here to-night to offer any apology for my actions. I am responsible only to my own conscience. No member of my congregation ever said to me you should not have preached such and such a sermon, or delivered such and such a speech, though it by no means follows that they always agreed with me or felt bound by my utterance. It may, however, be legitimate for me to say that I found the compulsion to act for the good of my fellow-men in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That Gospel seemed meaningless unless it were a trumpet call to do battle for the right in every department of human life. We love our country and desire her welfare whatsoever creed we may hold in religion or politics. We are all oppressed with the thought of Lady Wilde's poem. (Applause).

Earth is thrilling with new aspirations,
Rending the fetters that bar and ban;
We alone of the Christian nations
Fall in the rear of the march of man.

REVIEWS.

"Records of a Family, 1800-1933," by H. M. M'Lachlan, M.A., D.D., F.R. Hist. T., and Manchester University Press—8/6.

This forms an appropriate companion volume to "The Life of Alex. Gordon," by the same author. In appearance the volume is produced in the same restrained, dignified form, in keeping with the Manchester University Press, from which it has been issued. It is a difficult matter to make selections from a book which is full of fascinating interest, and which brings us into friendly relations with the very pick of Unitarian and Liberal Christians of the last century and a third. We find hints of great value with reference to well-known names and how they came to be linked up with the family tree. Portraits are given as well as biographical sketches of John Relly Beard, "The Apostles" (John Relly Beard, Charles Beard, and their friends), Charles Beard, John Rait Beard, Sir Lewis Beard, Mary Shipman Beard, Sarah Beard, with James Rait Beard, John Dendy, Mary Dendy, Helen Bosanquet (nee Dendy), Arthur Dendy.

Dr. M'Lachlan, with the expert touch of a skilled biographer, shows the emanation of the family in Portsmouth and Devon from George Whitfield's community, and Dr. John Relly Beard, was called Relly after one of Whitfield's preachers, and another brother had the name James Rait, which was repeated again in the case of one, who was personally known to some who will read these lines, as a prominent Manchester citizen of the firm of Beard, Agate and Co., Grey Cloth Agents, as well as a member of the Committee of the Unitarian College, Manchester. The influence of Lindsey, Priestley and Belsham was still strong in the early years of the nineteenth century, and John Relly Beard became a staunch uncompromising Unitarian. Needless to say, however, the Unitarianism of that date was a different thing from what it became in succeeding generations, and his son Charles Beard, when editor of "The Theological Review," refused an article by him "in the interests

of unity." Charles Beard was as staunch as his father, but at the Provincial Assembly on 21st June, 1877, he startled many by declaring: "For myself, I belong to no Unitarian organisation. I will not assume the name, and will allow no name to be ascribed to me narrower than 'Christian'. . . . The word 'Unitarian' is regarded in the light of a creed. It is to me, and to the vast majority of men outside, and, therefore, I want to get rid of it." John Hamilton Thom, his predecessor at Renshaw Street Chapel, said, May 25, 1889: "I have reason to know that Mr. Beard would have resigned the pulpit from which he preached Unitarianism if that had been the alternative, rather than have made himself a member of a religious society or an association of churches with a doctrinal symbol."

In recollections by Sarah Dendy (nee Beard), there is a reference to an old familiar friend in Co. Down: "Not long before my father gave up the school we had an Irishman, a Mr. Napier, who afterwards went into the Unitarian ministry, and died only last year (1911) at a great age after a long and honourable career. If I had not already been engaged, it is possible that I might have married him as he wished me to do, and have spent my life in Ireland." A footnote—"William Napier (1827-1911), educated at Manchester College, minister at Clough, Co. Down, 1867-1911. The life-work of Miss Mary Dendy is a gem. She deserves to rank with Florence Nightingale, and another great worker in public affairs was Helen Bosanquet (nee Dendy), LL.D. Her portrait in itself is as eloquent as the chapter. This is a book which appeals to the heart as well as the head, and readers must do their own reviewing.

Annual Report of "Belfast City Mission," 1934-1935.

Stanhope Street Mission is well-known to our congregations, and its good work merits the highest praise. That makes this report of the Belfast City Mission all the more interesting, and it is certainly a very remarkable work which is being carried on. Naturally the Subscription List calls for some attention, especially that of the local business firms. There is a group photo of the missionaries at the opening. In twenty-nine localities are week-night Bicle Classes ranging from 35 to 200. Sunday scholars in the same localities range from 63 to 600. A schedule is given of hours visiting, visits to the sick, and families joined Churches, etc., which reveals systematic work of an intensive kind. There are "instructions to agents" worth perusal. "Read a portion of Scripture and pray in each house, if permitted." "Spend at least four hours each day (except Saturday and Sabbath) in visitation — keep a journal of your daily proceedings, insert names of those you visit, and submit it once a month to your Superintendent." "Avoid carefully all political, secular and controversial subjects both in your Mission Hall and open-air meetings." We cannot but admire the devotion and the system exercised in this good work, though no doubt feeling alien to much of the theology implied.

OBITUARY.

Mrs. John Millar, Innishargie.

Mrs. John Millar passed away on October 23rd, after nineteen months' severe illness with heart trouble. At the commencement of the illness she was not expected to survive a week. Our sympathy is very much with her bereaved husband, who farms his land in the old parish of Innishargie, Kircubbin. Mrs. Millar was an intelligent, educated woman, and her fortitude during her long illness made a deep impression on her friends and neighbours. The family is one of the foundation families of Ballyhemlin. A very notable minister of Dromore, Mr. Millar was connected with this family.

"It was one of the most revealing moments of my life when I grasped for the first time that the life within, the life of the spirit, is identical with the life as realized to the fullest by Jesus Christ."—Rom Landau.

REPORTS.

Mountpottinger. — Harvest Services were held on October 20th, when Rev. J. J. Magill, B.A., occupied the pulpit, there being good congregations both morning and evening. The Church had been tastefully decorated under the direction of the members of the Women's League, and our thanks are given to all who by their gifts of produce or flowers helped in this respect. At the morning Service Mrs. J. Allen was the soloist, and in the evening Mr. David Nelson filled this role. The Duncairn Male Quartette were also present in the evening, and rendered acceptable contributions. To all these talented people we express our gratitude.—E.R.J.

Antrim.—A very successful Harvest Thanksgiving Service was held in the Old Presbyterian Meeting House on Sunday, October 27th, at 3.30 o'clock, when the Rev. John M'Cleery, B.A., S.T.M., of Newry, preached an eloquent sermon to a crowded congregation from the words "Consider the lilies how they grow." The music, led by Mr. Albert Taylor, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M., of Belfast, with a large augmented choir from the various Protestant Churches, was most enthusiastic. Miss Curran, L.R.A.M., of Belfast, rendered faultlessly two solos. Leading members from the other Churches manifested practical sympathy with us by collecting at the Service. The old historic Meeting House was tastefully decorated by willing workers of the congregation. Tea was provided after Service in the Vestry by the ladies of the congregation for the choir, which was greatly appreciated. The one disappointment being that the afternoon turned out so wet that some were prevented from being present. But in spite of the weather, the entire Service proved very successful, and was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone present.

Warrenpoint.—On Sunday afternoon, October 20th, in the First Presbyterian Church, Warrenpoint, the gallery, which had not been used for ten years past, had to be requisitioned for seating accommodation, so large was the congregation. The "Newry Telegraph" devotes almost an entire page to the report, producing Rev. J. M'Cleery's portrait, and publishing interesting passages in large print. The music was in charge of Mr. Harry Heather, L.L.C.M., organist of Kilbroney Parish Church, Rostrevor. The choir was augmented for the occasion. The immense congregation was held spell-bound with the exquisite singing by Mr. Norman C. Caruth, Rostrevor, of the solo entitled "Harvest." The old historic Church, dating back to the 17th century, was beautifully decorated; a miniature corn-stack in front of the pulpit was the work of Mr. David Reid, Derrylecka. Mr. M'Cleery, in the course of his sermon, said: "We supply our own wants by depriving others of what we need for ourselves. That is the doctrine of the raiders on the North-West Frontier of India — it is the doctrine of the leading race in Abyssinia and of the Arab nomad in the desert wilds, but even civilised man hasn't entirely got rid of it. It is Mussolini's doctrine, too. And, indeed, a great many of us are continually engaged in trying to get the better of one another." Those responsible for the decorations were Rev. and Mrs. J. M'Cleery, Misses J. and N. Robb, S. Bailey, T. M'Guffin, L. Jones, Mrs. Larmour, Mrs. Doey, Mrs. F. Kerr, Messrs. T. Bailey, F. Kerr, sen.; F. Kerr, jun.; R. Kerr, and M. A. Wharton. The sale of materials took place the day following.

All Souls'.—A Sale of Work, under the auspices of the Free Christian Women's League was held in Rosemary Hall, Elmwood Avenue, Belfast, on Friday, November 15th. The opener was Mrs. A. Scott, Dunmurry, the chairman was the Right Rev. Dr. A. L. Agnew, Moderator. The two-fold object of the Sale was to raise money for Christmas charities and the Church Funds. The Badminton Club's Whist Drive realised £7 12s 6d, which was handed to Mr. D. Henderson, treasurer of congregation.

Holywood—The local branch of the Women's League held their monthly meeting on the 11th inst., when Miss F. Heron gave a most interesting talk on "The Girls' Club Union." Owing to the

inclement weather there was a poor attendance, but those present were glad to hear what Miss Heron had to tell us, and enjoyed the meeting.

Ravara.—The Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Sunday afternoon at 3.30 and Monday evening at 8 o'clock, October 27th and 28th. The Meeting House was beautifully decorated for the occasion by the ladies of the congregation, who, undeterred by wretched weather, came together on Saturday evening to carry out their important task, and were afterwards entertained to tea by Miss Minnis and Miss M. Orr. On Sunday afternoon the Rev. J. D. Davis conducted the service. On Monday evening the Rev. Dr. Agnew, the Moderator, occupied the pulpit, whose appropriate sermon was highly appreciated by the congregation. The congregational singing was inspiring. The choir gave a splendid rendering of the anthem "And God Said," and great credit is due to Mrs. M'Cartney, who presided at the organ. The weather conditions on Sunday and Monday were extremely bad, yet on both occasions the Meeting House was full, and of those present many had come long distances from various places in Co. Down and Co. Antrim.

Mountpottinger Women's League.—The monthly meeting of the Branch was held on October 29th. A portion of the evening was devoted to business arrangements for the Sale of Work and Cake Fair to be held on 13th December. Miss Hind, of Comber, has kindly consented to perform the opening ceremony, and the Rev. Edgar Lockett is presiding. The business meeting was followed by a social, at which the following friends contributed to the programme of music, etc. — Mrs. Harold Beattie and Mrs. Patton, songs; Miss Sarah M'Ilwrath, piano; and Misses Moore and Eileen Spratt, recitations. Mrs. John Russell presided, and a vote of thanks was passed to the ladies who kindly helped to make the evening an enjoyable one.—K.F.

Rademon. — A Branch of the Unitarian Women's League has recently been formed in this congregation. Great assistance was given by Mrs. Glynn Davies, of Comber; Mrs. Ewbank, and others. The office-bearers are—President, Miss Elaine Porter; treasurer, Mrs. James Hanna; secretary, Mrs. John Duff. Two or three well-attended meetings have been already held. The first work to be undertaken is a concert, which is arranged with the object of raising a fund to carry out necessary repairs to the congregational property. This will be held in the Meeting House on the evening of Thursday, December 5th, at 7.30 o'clock.

Banbridge.—The United Service in Remembrance Sunday was held in our Church, which was filled beyond capacity, hundreds failing to enter. There was a splendid parade of ex-service men, accompanied by the local Guides and Scouts. Their standards were placed before the pulpit on each side of a vase of poppies, and before which a large memorial wreath was laid. The local clergy assisted in the Service, and the special preacher was Dr. A. L. Agnew. His appropriate address was very much appreciated. There was a record collection in aid of the Earl Haig Benevolent Fund. On Armistice Day a service round the War Memorial was conducted by the Rev. P. Godding as chairman of the local Branch of the British Legion. There was a great gathering of the people, and the service was very impressive.

Downpatrick.—The procession on Armistice Sunday afternoon to Downpatrick Presbyterian Non-Subscribing Church of the British Legion, Boys' Brigade, and Girl Guides was headed by the Craig Flute Band. The Remembrance Service was very impressive. "Blessed are the Dead" was the introit; and the hymns, led by an augmented choir, with Miss M. Dickson at the organ, were: "For all the Saints," "Nearer my God," "God of our Fathers," and "Lord, while for all Mankind we Pray." The "Last Post" and "Reveille" were sounded by a bugler of the Northants Regiment. Rev. Wm. Eakin, of Belfast, addressing the large congregation from Exodus xii., 14, spoke of the men who, twenty years ago, came from all parts of the Empire in the cause of what they believed to be the most priceless possessions of the race — justice and freedom. High and low, the rancher and the prospector, farmer and laird, student, professor, poet, politi-

cian, prince and peasant, such an army had never in history been brought together. Germany was then challenging all that had been dearly bought and laboriously developed in international law; civilisation was in danger of being destroyed. We honoured the memory of those who met the destroyer and stemmed the tide of conquest, at Mons, Passchendale, the Somme, and other fields. Their sacrifice would never be forgotten so long as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, England, Scotland, and Ireland flew the flag of freedom. "Their name liveth for evermore." A collection for the Haig Fund was taken up by Dr. Robb, Captain Craig Gardiner, Captain J. Maxwell, Captain J. Z. Sloan, Messrs. J. Kelly, E. Quinn, J. Mackenzie, T. Morris, and W. Newman. After the Benediction the National Anthem was sung with fervour.

MALCOLM DRAMATIC SOCIETY.

The above Society, which is in connection with the Domestic Mission, Stanhope Street, Belfast, entered on their second season on Thursday evening, 14th November, when they produced for the first time on any stage, "Greater Love," by F. M. Pett. The capacity of the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, was fully taxed on that occasion. The Society are lucky in having such a versatile member as Mr. Pett, who wrote the play, produced it, and, at the last moment, deputized for the principal character, who was unable to attend owing to illness. Mr. Pett, as Dr. Lawson, acted as if he had been a general practitioner all his life. At the close of the play repeated calls for author resulted in a few depreciatory remarks by this gentleman as to the merits of his production, and congratulations to the rest of the cast, when none deserved these more than himself.

Mrs. J. R. Sherlock, as Martha, the Irish housekeeper, was true to life and gave further proof of her ability as an actress in diverse roles. Mr. J. Sherlock and Miss L. Carson as Bill Thompson and his "old dutch" were typical cockneys. Master D. Carson, as the boy who wanted pills for his sister because his father found they were good for the dogs, shows promise, and is worthy of a larger part. Jenkins, the Butler (Mr. J. Gibson), was a perfect example of calm austerity. Miss M. Lindsay as Lady Hammond had a big part, which was excellently interpreted by her; this is indeed her metier. Mr. F. C. Hutley as her husband, though not entrusted with so many lines, made a valuable contribution to the success of the production. The brief appearances of Lady Toner (Miss M. Loughans) and Marie the maid (Miss L. M'Clelland) made one wish to see how they would sustain larger parts. Last, but not least, was the Rev. W. Eakin, who did not need to act. His part was that of the clergyman and confidant of the chief characters. The finest tribute we can pay him is to say he was just himself; his kindly personality permeated the part he was called on to play.

The play was staged in a very adequate manner, and the changes from Dr. Lawson's surgery in Stepney to the Park Lane mansion of the Hammond's were expeditiously performed. Further productions of this Society will be eagerly anticipated, and it is to be hoped that Mr. Pett will serve up many another "good dish of tripe," as he called it.

(SKEGONIELL).

— The Unitarian and — Free Christian Laymen's League.

—:o:—

BELFAST CHAPTER

meets in the CENTRAL HALL, ROSEMARY STREET, at 8 p.m., Third Thursday of the month, October to May, inclusive.

OBJECTS (inter alia).

To encourage laymen to take a more active par in the work of the Churches.

To form a bond of union and closer co-operation between the members of the various congregations.

The Committee invite those who are not already members to join. The minimum subscription is 2/6, and further particulars may be obtained from—

MR. J. H. GILLILAND,
35 Rosemary St., Belfast, Hon. Sec.
MR. J. EDMONDSON, Jr., Asst. Hon, Sec.
19 Lime Street, Belfast.

ULSTER HALL MEETING.

The Ulster Hall was well filled. Collection amounted to £26. The Rev. Dr. Agnew presided.

Rev. John Begg, of Larne, and the Rev. John M'Cleery, B.A., S.T.M., Newry, took part in the service.

Dr. Rattray preached from Matthew xxv. 14: "It is as when a man, going into another country, called his servants and delivered unto them his goods." He said that fundamental questions about life were seldom asked —such questions as, "Is there purpose in life " "Why are we here?"' In the world situation in which we find ourselves it was especially desirable to raise such questions. What Gospel is there for a man suffering the worst that this world can do to a man? Henley's poem, "Out of the night that covers me," revealing the power in the soul to be more than conqueror over the worst the world can do to one offered the clue. If the preacher were asked what was the simplest, truest picture of reality he knew, he would reply, "The parable of the talents," but it must be seen in a new light. It meant that you cannot make sense of the outer world by itself. Men are not born equal, and they are not equal except in a solely spiritual sense. The man of two talents who discovered, developed and used them in the common service could not do more, and in spiritual performance was the equal of the man of five talents who did the best with his. The man with one talent would have been of equal success if he had used it rightly. But Jesus was not so indulgent as popular Christianity represented. He did not say of the man of one talent, "Poor fellow, one cannot expect anything of him."

What do the talents represent in modern life? They represent the body and the mind and the total environment. The discovery and use of talents includes the proper organisation of the total environment. The solution is not equality, but the acceptance of the duty of judging values and assigning opportunity to capacity. But developed men, like William Morris, were not content with handsome clothes and houses for themselves; they wanted everybody to be handsomely clothed and housed. The social problem is the working out of this task.

But meanwhile, until this is done adequately, what has religion to say to men? It does not promise supernatural protection in body or mind. There are, to be sure, uncovenanted mercies that may come, but they are uncovenanted. This world is not run according to poetic justice. If the good always prospered and the wicked always suffered, religion would be a commercial proposition. If the wicked always prospered and the good always suffered, things would be worse. The fact is that in this life we are exposed to real risks and opportunities. The poet Keats came up against the fact of evil, and found the solution that this is a place of soul-making. That is what Jesus taught, and His example is robbed of its power if he were God and knew Himself to be God. It would be as if a millionaire said, "I will show you how to live in the slums." But if Jesus was like ourselves and overcame the evil in His life , he can move us to the overcoming of evil in ours.

Donald Hankey said that religion is betting your life there is a God. It is that, but it is more than that. Religion has its own kind of certitude. Critics of religion say, "Where is your God?" Even William Morris said, "Produce your God and I will believe in Him." This scepticism is powerless against the teaching of Jesus in the parable of the talents. "It is as when a man, going into another country, delivered unto his servants his goods and went on his journey." Even modern sceptics have discovered something of religious certitude. H. G. Wells in a time of illumination discovered that God is courage. So did Barrie. It is a fact of experience that there is a spirit which prompts to the disintedested pursuit of truth, goodness and beauty. That spirit is God. The greatest need of our time is for people to make up their minds as to the values in life and guide their living accordingly. Sir Arthur Eddington has pointed out that astronomy does not explain the desire for truth in the astronomer, from which alone astronomy has come. The sole guardian of truth on this planet is men

and women who respond to the prompting to truthfulness. And so it is with goodness and with the valuing of beauty. These things are our utmost certitude, and we have the conviction that, as Lowell said, "within the dim unknown standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own," blessing with good conscience and courage and faith.

OUR CHURCH AND TEMPERANCE.

Last year the Temperance Committee recommended that the congregations of the Non-Subscribing Order should keep step with their neighbours of the General Assembly by observing the same day as Temperance Sunday. A similar decision has been taken this year, and the request is made to all ministers and Sunday school teachers that January 19th, 1936, be set apart for this purpose, and that the opportunity be used to point out the dangers that beset all who give way to the drinking habit. The consumption of alcoholiq beverages has largely increased during the last two years and this constitutes a growing menace to the well-being of our people, to which we cannot be indifferent. For a considerable time drunkenness was almost unknown, but now, with the return of prosperity, it is beginning to re-appear, and that in quarters most unexpected. It is commonly said that it is not unusual to see girls, scarcely out of their 'teens badly under the influence after dances and social parties. The prospect of the future mothers of our people becoming addicted to strong drink is one that cannot be contemplated with equanimity. The call comes to each of us to do our share in warding off this fate from the children of the land. The Temperance Committee feels confident that its appeal for support in the work committed to it will not pass unheeded. It is satisfied that large numbers will attend the

Rally of Representatives of Young People's Organisations,'

which has been arranged to be held in the Central Hall, Belfast, on Thursday evening, January 16th, 1936. It is intended and desired that all associations of young people in connection with our Churches will take part. Members of debating societies, dramatic or sports' clubs, Sunday schools, Bible classes, guilds, temperance associations, are warmly invited. Papers will be read by youths, just on the threshold of life, on such subjects as "War," "Our Church and Young People," "Temperance." It is hoped the gathering will serve the purpose of drawing more closely together the youths and maidens amongst us, who are reaching maturity, and deepening their interest, not only in the work of their own congregations, but also in the spread of "pure and undefiled religion" as the only secure foundation on which the kingdom of God on earth can be based.

J. JOSEPH MAGILL, Convener.

Men have preached and systems fell,
Preaching right—but leading wrong.
Instead of Peace they gave us Hell,
God's kingdom lost to an angry throng.

Be ye, then, the new Disciples,
Religious truly and righteous be.
Good deeds are more than creeds which stifled,
They redeem and help—Humanity.
12/11/'35. —Matthew (Dublin).

* * *

"The success of the practical man may often be summed up in the words of the Psalmist: 'He gave them their desire, and sent leanness withal into their soul.' "—Dr. Inge, in the "Evening Standard."

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